

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Sangamon County Historic Preservation Commission**  
**March 2, 2016**

**Members Present:** Chuck Pell, Chairman  
Robert Sherman, Vice Chairman  
Jeanette Goza  
Jerry Jacobson  
Tina Lathan  
Aakash Raut  
James Schackmann  
Norm Sims  
Dean Williams

**Members Absent:** Mike Brooks

**Staff Present:** Steve Keenan

**Others Attending:** Mary Jessup, Pastor, Buffalo Hart Presbyterian Church

**Call to Order:** A quorum being present, Chairman Pell called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM.

**Approval of Minutes:** Chairman Pell entertained a motion to approve the February minutes. A motion to approve the February minutes was made by Vice Chairman Sherman and was seconded by Commissioner Schackmann. The voice vote to approve was unanimous.

**Chairman's Report/Comments:** Chairman Pell reminded the Commissioners to search for National Register sites in their townships. He advised that Wikipedia is a good source to start with and IHPA's HARGIS system is another. Chairman Pell recognized Commissioner Williams to introduce a guest speaker.

Commissioner Williams introduced Mary Jessup, Pastor of the Buffalo Hart Presbyterian Church. He asked about the church's style, to which Vice Chairman Sherman said it is probably Victorian vernacular with no dominant style.

Reverend Jessup said the church was built in 1900; and, she has been pastor for 23 years. She said the congregation formed in 1896. Reverend Jessup summarized two additions, one in 1957 (a kitchen) and another in 2007 (a Sunday school classroom). Reverend Jessup said there are original pews and that some stained glass windows are replacements after a 1927 tornado. She said newer (yet also historic) windows are not identical to the original stained glass windows in the rear of the church. Reverend Jessup said some original stained glass windows were found in the attic. She said the sanctuary holds about 85 people shoulder to shoulder. Reverend Jessup said in 2007 three dividing walls were removed and the wood paneling was removed, cleaned, and put back on the walls. Reverend Jessup said the floor was from 1957. She discussed the Buffalo Hart train station, a closed general goods store, and a prior wooden sidewalk to the store. Vice Chairman Sherman asked if most of the European settlers were "Yankees", to which Reverend Jessup replied they came from the east and from Kentucky. Vice Chairman Sherman said the bump out in the station was used to watch for an approaching train. Vice Chairman Sherman, Commissioner Sims, and Reverend Jessup discussed the migration of the settlers from

Scotland to the Buffalo Hart area. Reverend Jessup said 1824 was the first time early European migrants became settlers. She mentioned a bicentennial in 2024. Commissioner Schackmann asked about the design of the stained glass window, to which Vice Chairman Sherman said it was Palladian. Chairman Pell said the shape is Palladian but there is not much significance to the design. He said it is interesting to compare the 1900 and the 1927 windows. Commissioner Williams asked about historically significant events. Reverend Jessup mentioned a church in Mechanicsburg that maybe was a hospital in the Civil War. She mentioned a member hosted the Farm Progress Show in the 1960s. Vice Chairman Sherman asked if the church in Mechanicsburg is still standing, to which Reverend Jessup said yes. Chairman Pell said it is likely in the Village of Mechanicsburg. Commissioner Jacobson asked about the spelling of Buffalo Hart. After some discussion, Reverend Jessup's interpretation of several local communities with -hart spellings seemed to carry. Commissioner Williams asked how long the congregation existed, to which Reverend Jessup said since 1896. He asked how many people come on Sundays, to which Reverend Jessup said about 60. Chairman Pell thanked Reverend Jessup for speaking and mentioned she is the spouse of the publisher (Mr. Fletcher "Bud" Farrar) of the *Illinois Times*. Reverend Jessup said the history of the church is extensively documented.

Commissioner Williams asked if Reverend Jessup would consent to landmarking the church. Reverend Jessup said in the Presbyterian system the Clerk of Session is considered the property owner of record. She said this person is an archivist. Commissioner Williams asked if Reverend Jessup could pass along the paperwork. He asked who is the owner, to which staff said the church, adding that the landmark application must be consented to by the legal property owner of record. Reverend Jessup said the Clerk of Session is in Barkley. Commissioner Jacobson asked if she was similar to a chair of the church board, to which Reverend Jessup said yes.

Commissioner Sims said this building strikes him as a good historical example of how rural churches were built. Reverend Jessup mentioned Rock Creek Presbyterian Church outside Tallula as another historic church to evaluate. She also mentioned Indian Point Church. Chairman Pell said you might want to mention to your congregation that the Sangamon County Historic Preservation Commission is undertaking an oldest farmhouse search. Everyone thanked Reverend Jessup for attending. Chairman Pell said it is always interesting to have an owner with a great knowledge of a building along with an accomplished photographer (Commissioner Williams).

**Old Business:** Chairman Pell asked Commissioner Jacobson to report on the Farmhouse Committee meeting. Commissioner Jacobson said Commissioner Brooks prepared a press release that was circulated to the Farmhouse Committee members. Commissioner Jacobson said he thought it was an action item that the Historic Preservation Commission supports the press release. Chairman Pell asked if the press release was released, to which staff said it is not known. Commissioner Sims suggested this item is a ministerial function with a prior approval to move ahead on the project. Otherwise, it cannot be heard today because it is not on the agenda. [The Farmhouse Committee did not meet due to lack of a quorum.] Chairman Pell said he believed most items are managerial or ministerial actions. He said the agenda did not mention approving a press release. Commissioner Sims said this is not a decision point that requires new policy.

Commissioner Williams said the George Power farm wants to have Channel 20 use them as an example farm for B-roll. Chairman Pell asked if the Power farm would submit an application, to which Commissioner Williams said no. Commissioner Williams asked to have any reporter(s) contact him after the release goes out. Chairman Pell, Commissioner Sims, Commissioner Jacobson, and Commissioner Williams discussed using the farmhouse for a news story. The

consensus was it might be better to use a non-participating house to avoid endorsing a particular property.

Staff highlighted the new website. He said if anyone has comments to please email them. Staff asked for any additions Commissioners might want to see beyond Facebook news feeds. Commissioner Williams suggested a Facebook icon. Staff demonstrated how to access the website. Chairman Pell asked about Facebook likes, to which Commissioner Schackmann reported there are 65 likes. Chairman Pell suggested adding photos to the Facebook page as they are discussed in the meetings.

**New Business:** None.

**Initial Recommendation for New Landmark Applications:** None.

**Member Reports:** Commissioner Williams asked if the Buffalo Hart Presbyterian Church was worthy of landmarking. Chairman Pell said it is worth it as an example of a rural church. He also said it would need to be examined in totality. Chairman Pell said it would be nice to know if the historic church in Mechanicsburg is in unincorporated or incorporated Sangamon County. He said it would also be good to know if the church in Tallula is [in Sangamon County]. Chairman Pell asked if the Buffalo Hart church is in the unincorporated area, to which staff said yes. Commissioner Williams said he would go through the history to determine what significant events have occurred. Commissioner Sims said it might not have to have significant events. Chairman Pell said an application could mention the church is a rural church with a long history of operation. He said the more important question is whether the owners are interested in landmarking the property, which is unknown. Chairman Pell said the original building is compelling with the stained glass windows, the arch, and the bell tower. Commissioner Williams said the wainscoting and the altar are originals. Chairman Pell said the entryway is sometimes called a narthex and that there was a dividing wall that could be moved. Commissioner Williams and Vice Chairman Sherman pointed out there is a door from floor to ceiling that separates the gathering space from the sanctuary. Vice Chairman Sherman said the original doors were located underneath the bell tower; he said the church had a stove for heating in it originally. Chairman Pell asked if Commissioner Lathan knew when the Island Grove Church was constructed. Commissioner Lathan said 1862. Chairman Pell said this church is newer. Vice Chairman Sherman said knowing when the congregation was established helps a great deal.

Commissioner Williams thanked the Commissioners for attending the premiere of the Lincoln funeral re-enactment documentary. He offered a DVD to Commissioner Goza so she can watch it.

Commissioner Jacobson highlighted a farmhouse search entry located in Cartwright Township near Pleasant Plains. He said it is a two-story building that was constructed in 1855/1856 according to the application. Commissioner Jacobson said it was remodeled in 1922. Chairman Pell asked if this is the fifth entry, to which Commissioner Jacobson said yes. Commissioner Jacobson described some photos of the basement and the exterior of the structure. He asked if the stone in the basement could help date the house. Vice Chairman Sherman said it might date it to 1860 or before. He added knowing where the stone quarry was for the foundation would help a great deal. Vice Chairman Sherman said he remembered looking at a farmhouse in the area about 30 years ago that had limestone blocks in the basement. Commissioner Jacobson said there is little hard evidence with the entry to establish a construction date that is not word of mouth. Vice Chairman Sherman said the house looks like it has a central hall with two rooms on either side.

He said the detail looks Italianate. Commissioner Jacobson mentioned two other possible entries that might enter but have not submitted forms. Chairman Pell asked if there have been any site visits, to which Commissioner Jacobson said no. Commissioner Jacobson discussed the press release and how it indicates the house must have some connection to farming. He said the date remains 1860 or before.

Commissioner Goza said she found a house to survey. She said it is called the Wasser Farm and dates from 1874. Several Commissioners mentioned it would be a perfect survey item. Commissioner Goza indicated the owner has done some research on Sangamo Town. She said the owner has two houses he wants to have reviewed.

Vice Chairman Sherman highlighted a house in Curran Township that has both modern additions and an older section. He said part of the house is a log house. Vice Chairman Sherman said it is to the left in the photo provided. Chairman Pell said this is a potential survey and a potential farmhouse item. Vice Chairman Sherman also highlighted a house in Williams Township. He said it is close whether it was built prior to 1860. Vice Chairman Sherman said it is a typical I-house with an addition on the back.

Commissioner Sims said staffing is down two or three. He advised the Commissioners to be prudent with staffing requests in the short term as the Regional Planning Commission embarks on several very large planning projects.

**Staff Reports:** Staff presented a tower for the Union Pacific railroad located outside Williamsville, Illinois. He said it is located in the unincorporated area and there are no landmarks or potential historic resources within ½ mile of the site. Staff said there was a reply from the railroad's consultant for the tower request considered at the February HPC meeting. He said the letter referred to guidelines advocating a ¼-mile buffer for these types of towers. Chairman Pell asked where the HPC notion of ½ mile came. Commissioner Sims said it is as good as any other number and that it is something that is easily visualized. Chairman Pell said it is arbitrary, to which Commissioner Sims said there is nothing in code. Commissioner Sims said that is typically a distance used in an Environmental Impact Study [EIS]. Chairman Pell asked if there would be a letter, to which staff replied yes. Some discussion ensued about the beginnings of the positive train control project and its indirect relations to high-speed rail.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Additional Comments:** None.

**Adjourn:** Chairman Pell entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Williams made a motion to adjourn the March meeting with Commissioner Lathan seconding the motion. The voice vote to approve was unanimous and the meeting adjourned at 4:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Keenan